

**AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
ROOM 803, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2008, 11:00 A.M.**

**Voting Members present:**

Deke Copenhaver, Mayor of Augusta – **Vice-Chairman**

C. H. Williams, Mayor of Burnettsville

Sandra Korbelik (representing Fred Cavanaugh, Mayor of Aiken)

Stephen Strohming (representing Ronnie Young, Chairman, Aiken County Council)

**Voting Members absent:**

Robert Buchwitz, Chairman Hephzibah Commission

Tom Cobb, Mayor of Blythe

George James, Mayor of Grovetown

Marion Carnell, SC – 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District Commissioner

Col John Holwick – Fort Gordon

Gena Evans, GA DOT Commissioner

Ron Cross, Chairman, Columbia Co. Commission – **Chairman**

**Others Present (N = Nonvoting Member)**

**Augusta-Richmond Co. Planning Commission**

George Patty

Paul DeCamp

Lynn Russell

**GA DOT**

Vonda Everett

Cissy McNure

**Columbia County**

Ronnie Hutto

**City of Augusta**

Sharon Dottery

**SC DOT**

Michael Dennis

Jim Frierson

Brian Fulmer

**Aiken County**

Gerald Jefferson

**Clean Air Campaign**

Mike Williams

Kenyon Thweatt

**INVOCATION AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**Mr. Copenhaver chaired the meeting in Mr. Cross' absence.**

- 1. Consider approval of the minutes of the Policy Committee meetings held on September 11, 2008.**

Mr. Williams moved to approve the minutes of September 11, 2008. Mrs. Korbelik seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**2. Consider recommending an amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program as follows:**

- (a) Amend Work Element 4.13 Special Studies – Request from Aiken County to add \$50,000 to hire a consultant to develop a system for a regional travel demand model which, among other things, is needed to include current, more accurate socioeconomic data for Aiken County.**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. Representatives from North Augusta, Aiken, Aiken County and Burnetown have been meeting for the past couple of months and have agreed a travel demand model needs to be established to complement the travel demand model from GA DOT. This will not replace the current model, but will complement it with the most current socioeconomic data to help for future planning purposes such as the for developing the Comprehensive Plan update and Land Management Regulations. An RFP will be sent out to hire the consultant to prepare the model. The cost is expected to be approximately \$75,000. Twenty five thousand is already programmed in the UPWP so an additional \$50,000 is needed.

Mr. Hutto moved to approve the amendment to the FY 2009 UPWP. Mrs. Korbely seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**3. Consider approving the draft FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program (see attached)**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. A ten-page summary of the draft UPWP was attached to the agenda. The summary includes a description of each work element and the total estimated budget for the program year that will begin July 1, 2009. The work elements mirror the work elements in the current year and cover transportation planning, transit planning air quality; and intermodal planning. The update of the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will be the top priority special study project in 2010. Even though the deadline for completing the LRTP update is not until September 2010, work will begin on the project 12 to 15 months prior to adoption. As part of the recertification of ARTS, recommendations were made for the following projects - updating the Bike and Pedestrian Plan that was prepared in 2002 and update the ITS Plan prepared in 2001. Special studies may be completed on these and other projects with any funds not committed to the LRTP update. This is a draft and is subject to review by the FHWA, FTA, SCDOT and GDOT during January. The final UPWP along with any comments will be brought back to the Policy Committee in March for final adoption.

Ms. Korbely said that the City of Aiken will be applying for additional funds for a corridor study of Dougherty Road. She asked if the funds should be added to the final UPWP in the spring or added to the draft now. The reply was that the funds can be added to the final UPWP.

Mr. Strohming moved to approve the draft FY 2010 UPWP. Mayor Williams seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **4. Update on Special Studies Projects:**

##### **(a) Regional Freight Study**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. Since the last meeting in September the freight needs and deficiencies have been identified and documented and consultants have updated project prioritization criteria for evaluating projects to include in the freight plan and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). There has been additional stakeholder and public involvement in recent months. On October 16th, the second of two public information meetings was held. The consultants gave a presentation of the overall progress of the project and received public input. Some of the things people mentioned at that meeting include various safety issues related to freight movement in and through the region. There was a lot of discussion on hazardous railroad crossings located throughout the region and the presence of heavy freight traffic on roads throughout the region.

More recently, the Project Steering Committee met with the consultants on November 20<sup>th</sup>. The consultants provided an update on the progress of the project. They reviewed with the Committee members proposed freight related objectives that will be included in the long range plan update, refined project prioritization criteria and showed how projects would rank on that scoring system, and outlined the schedule for completing the final documentation. We anticipate to have completed the study by the end of this month or early January.

##### **(b) APT Transit Development Plan**

Mrs. Dottery presented this item. Mr. Johnson is out of town this week. Wilbur Smith and Associates out of Columbia was hired to prepare the Transit Development Plan. The consultant team was in town the week of November 17<sup>th</sup> and made a presentation to the Augusta Commission on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Jim Laughlin was on TV Channel – 6 with Mary Morrison to talk about the scope of the transit development plan. That same afternoon Mr. Laughlin and Mr. Heyward Johnson were on the Connect Live television show. The consultants also conducted interviews with the stakeholders and hired several temps to conduct surveys of transit riders. There are surveys in the windows at the transfer facility. A non rider survey will also be conducted.

##### **(c) City of Aiken Corridor Studies**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. The City of Aiken Corridor studies applications have been submitted to SC DOT for review.

#### **5. Update on Air Quality Initiatives**

##### **(a) Aiken County**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. Sustainable Skylines was introduced a couple meetings early. This is an initiative the EPA is sponsoring. A call for applications has been added to EPA's website for \$250,000 in grants. The cities of Aiken, North Augusta and the town of Burnetown will be used as stakeholders on

a grant application to be submitted under the program. Five grants, ranging from \$50,000 to \$150,000, will be awarded nationwide. December 17 is the deadline for applying for a Sustainable Skylines grant.

**(b) Richmond County**

**(b) Richmond County**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. Our latest stakeholders meeting of the CSRA Air Quality Alliance was held on October 15th. That meeting gave the representatives from both State Air Quality agencies an opportunity to share with us updated information on air quality in the ARTS study area. The news is that based on the new ozone standards, some part of the study area will be designated as non attainment for ozone. Those designations have to be submitted to EPA by the state air quality agencies next March and final designations will be made by EPA in March 2010. There will be a period of time in which we can take steps to blunt the impact of this designation. It has yet to be determined what part of the ARTS area will be designated as a nonattainment area. We will be monitoring the designation process and keep you informed about developments.

We have representatives from the Clean Air Campaign in attendance today. They have been great partners with us over the last couple of years as we have started to build our regional alliance. Since the last Policy Committee meeting, the Commute Options Program operated by the Clean Air Campaign has enrolled Fort Gordon as a participant. They have been making progress in having personnel sign up for the program. We would like to extend this to other entities on the Georgia side of the river.

We are drafting an outline more of initiatives that are ongoing in the region that show the state air quality agencies what we are doing regionally and locally to promote cleaner air. This information can be passed on to EPA so the federal government is also aware of what we are doing.

Mayor Copenhagen met with representatives with the Georgia Conservancy and they have some ongoing initiatives in Atlanta and are interested in working with us in Augusta.

Mr. Mike Williams of the Clean Air Campaign stated that the Clean Air Campaign is working with Fort Gordon and have signed up several other employees recently. We are getting started with Commute Options Program and realize that a staff member is needed here locally. One reason we are here today is to interview candidates for a part-time position with the Clean Air Campaign in Augusta.

Mrs. Korbelik stated that Aiken is sending a letter to the Governor Mark Sanford in December regarding nonattainment boundaries on the South Carolina side of the study area. Any of the local governments that will be most directly affected by the designation can send letters. DHEC is accepting input from impacted areas during the month of December.

## **8. Status of Projects:**

### **(a) Georgia Highways**

Ms. Everett presented this item. .

- SR 104 (Washington Road at Halali Farm Road (intersection improvement project) –This project is scheduled to be let in December 8<sup>th</sup> contingent on funds being available. Three maintenance/ resurfacing projects are also scheduled to be let.
- William Few Parkway – a revised traffic study is underway. Columbia County wants to advance this project.
- Flowing Wells Road – The Value Engineering Study is complete and Columbia County is waiting on recommendations from this study.
- Alexander Drive – Augusta continues to acquire right-of-way on this project. It is scheduled to be let for construction in the spring of 2009.

### **(b) South Carolina Highways**

Mr. Dennis presented this item.

- Palmetto Parkway Phase 2 – Major construction continues to progress at the I-520 / I-20 / US 25 Interchange. Through the end of October, \$106 million has been expended on this project, which is 70% complete and 8% ahead of schedule. Completion date is December 2009.
- Georgia Avenue Extension – Construction is 80% complete. Work continues on signal installation and binder / surface paving. The expected November 2008 completion date has been extended due to utility conflicts.
- Silver Bluff Road (SC 3020) – SC DOT has developed intersection improvements designs and presented them to the ARTS South Carolina Policy Subcommittee. Public feedback on the revised design has been favorable.
- East Buena Vista Avenue - The project is on hold until the new scope is determined and accepted into ARTS Long Range Plan and TIP. Once approved, a new schedule will be developed.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Interchange – Mabus Brothers Construction has been awarded the project and is in contract negotiations with SC DOT to begin work. Additional funds have been added to the project.
- Intersection Improvement Project (Dougherty Rd. @ Silver Bluff Rd.) - Funds have been programmed for the addition of a right turn lane from NB Silver Bluff Road to EB Dougherty Road. Traffic Engineering will manage the project and develop a construction schedule for this project. It is anticipated that additional right-of-way will be needed to construct the project. Construction is expected to begin in late 2009.

- East Buena Vista Avenue - funds have been allocated and will be programmed in the TIP shortly. The program manager is working on a construction schedule.

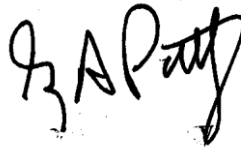
**(c) Augusta Public Transit**

Mrs. Dottery resented this item. The Augusta Commission has mandated a \$1.5 million budget cut for transit. The Transit Department has proposed the following changes to achieve the desired budget reduction: (a) increase fares to raise an additional \$300,000, (b) eliminate Saturday to save \$900,000 and (c) eliminate vacant job openings to save another \$300,000. A public meeting will be held on December 18<sup>th</sup> at May Park at 4:30 to receive citizen input.

**(d) Aiken County Transit**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. Mrs. Shade sent an email with the status of Aiken County Transit. There is an increase in ridership. A shelter is being constructed in Burnetown which is collaboration between Burnetown and the Lower Savannah COG.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. A. Patty".

George A. Patty  
Project Director